



# RATED PG: parental guidance suggested

A Parent's Guide for Student Academic Achievement and Financial Assistance

Volume 5 • Issue 2

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Spring 1998

## In this issue . . .

**W**elcome to a new year of *RATED PG: Parental Guidance Suggested*. This guide for student academic achievement and financial aid is published especially for you – the parents of Missouri ninth- and tenth-grade students.

*RATED PG* is published three times a year by Missouri Student Assistance Resource Services (MOSTARS), a division of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE), and the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA). Our goal is to provide you with the information you need now to help you assist your son or daughter in making critical education choices about the future.

Whether your student plans to attend a four-year university, a two-year college, a vocational/technical school, or to enter the workforce immediately after high school graduation, you will be helping him or her make sound decisions that will allow your student to reach his or her goals. We hope that *RATED PG* will give you some sound advice, helpful tips on where to look for specific information, and a little valuable insight into the many programs and services Missouri has to offer you and your student. We also welcome your input about *RATED PG*. If you have comments about this publication or would like to request that we address specific topics, please write to Genie Undernehr, MOSTARS, 3515 Amazonas Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

*Enjoy!*

## the CHOICES of a lifetime

### Choosing High School Courses

**W**hether your son or daughter plans to: a) begin working full-time immediately after high school graduation; b) attend college on a part-time basis; or, c) be a full-time college student, the classes your student takes during high school can make a vital difference in his or her future.

Your high school guidance counselor can help your student make these crucial decisions.

But it is just as crucial that you take an active role in knowing what courses your high school offers, what courses are important in meeting your student's career goals, and what courses he or she actually takes throughout high school.

#### PREPARATION IS THE KEY

It's a fact that although saving money for college is important, the lack of financial support is not the single, biggest reason why some students may not complete college.

One major reason may be their inability to meet challenges in the college classroom because they failed to select the appropriate courses for academic preparation in high school.

The same is true for success in the workplace with or without a college degree: the better the student is academically prepared in high school, the better equipped he or she will be to succeed in the workplace. That's why it is vital that you, as a parent, take charge of your student's academic program and study habits. Without solid academic preparation, all

the money in the world won't help your student succeed after high school.

#### THE DRUDGERY OF HOMEWORK

No student loves homework. In fact, in some students' opinions, the smaller the amount of homework and effort required by a class, the better the class. But year after year, national test results compared internationally reveal that American students on average score lower than their peers in other countries. Why? It's not because American students aren't as bright. The poor showing can more likely be attributed to the fact that American students can make academic choices that allow them to just 'get by.' That typically means taking a very minimal amount of core courses in the major subject areas like English, mathematics, social studies and the sciences.

What's the minimum amount? Missouri high schools require certain core courses that each student must take and pass to receive a high school diploma.

These courses, designated by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and individual school districts, should provide students with the basic knowledge and skills they need to succeed beyond high school. But most students should take a more rigorous course load – and not just those planning to attend a college university.

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# Smaller schools face challenges

*Parents, students have at least 5 other options when choices are limited*

**Y**ou've learned about the CBHE core curriculum and the Missouri College Preparatory Studies Certificate requirements.

You want to encourage your son or daughter to take a more challenging combination of courses to get the most out of his or her high school education. Then, you find out your high school doesn't offer some of the courses required. What can you do?

Don't panic. Although it's understandable that some smaller school districts face a huge challenge in offering

the breadth and depth of courses your student needs, there are ways you can work with your son or daughter to fill in gaps in his or her curriculum.

## ASK QUESTIONS

Dr. Robert Bartman, Missouri's commissioner of education, has stated that all public schools in the state have the capacity to offer the necessary courses for college and vocational/technical preparation. If your school is not offering all of the courses and activities your student needs

to fulfill these requirements, talk to the superintendent, principal, members of the local school board, and the local PTA group. Find out how school improvement

resources are being used.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Fiber-optic technology is bringing the world into the most remote of classrooms. A teacher can interact with several classes simultaneously thousands of miles away, asking and responding to questions immediately. Again, talk to your school's administration about the opportunities for bringing some courses to your high school via interactive technology.

## CORRESPOND

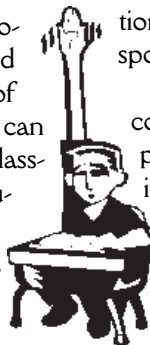
Nearly every postsecondary institution in Missouri offers some type of correspondence or independent study courses which students can take for credit. To find out what courses a particular

college offers and what the requirements are for those courses, contact that institution's admissions or correspondence study office.

Not all colleges accept correspondence or independent study course credit from other institutions. Contact the institution where your student plans to enroll to determine whether the credit will be accepted.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program gives students the opportunity to earn college credit while they are still in high school. High schools obtain materials and instructional support from the College Board. The College Board works with colleges



SEE **OPTIONS**, page 4

## Resource Center

**T**he Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides several resources, like the *Information File for Parents*, for students and their parents. Your high school guidance office may have some of them available. If not, call DESE's Guidance and Counseling Section at (573) 751-7966 for information.

### INFORMATION FILE FOR PARENTS

If you're looking for ways to help your student make decisions about educational planning, look up the *Information File for Parents*. It includes suggestions pertinent to each grade level, from middle school through high school, that will help you explore key issues regarding your student's education. The *File* also contains a list of "Helpful Hints for Parents" and suggestions for "Parenting

Skills and School Involvement."

Use the *File* to build a portfolio for your student, tracking his or her career plans, test results, report cards, immunization records, school activity calendars and other education-related information. Portfolios are available for parents of middle school, junior high school, and high school students.

To obtain a free sample of the *Information File for Parents*, contact the Center on Education and Training for Employment at (800) 848-4815, Ext. 47671. The Center on Education and Training for Employment is part of a consortium with state career guidance supervisors.

### MISSOURI VIEW

Missouri View is DESE's clearinghouse for information about careers, Missouri's colleges and universities, and Missouri scholarships. If your student's high school guidance/counseling office and/or your local public library does not have Missouri View, contact Dr. Jim Grogan at (314) 995-0795. ♦



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A Parent's Guide for Student Academic Achievement and Financial Assistance

**RATED PG: parental guidance suggested** is published three times each year by Missouri Student Assistance Resource Services (MOSTARS) and the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) for parents of Missouri high school freshmen and sophomores. Editorial content for this publication is shared by the commissioner of higher education and MOHELA.

High school counselors may photocopy issues of **RATED PG** after placing the following information on an original copy:  
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For more information about this publication and about items and articles printed in this newsletter, please write or call:

**Missouri Student Assistance Resource Services  
Information Service Center**

3515 Amazonas Drive  
Jefferson City, MO 65109  
(800) 473-6757 or (573) 751-3940

OR

**Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority  
Corporate Plaza  
14528 South Outer Forty Drive  
Chesterfield, MO 63017  
(314) 469-0600**



The Missouri Department of Higher Education makes every effort to provide program accessibility to all citizens without regard to disability. If you require this publication in an alternate form, please contact the MOSTARS Information Service Center at (800) 473-6757 or (573) 751-3940. Hearing/speech impaired may call (800) 735-2966.

# CHOICES, from page 1

Students who plan to enroll in a vocational education program or serve an apprenticeship after high school also need to take a rigorous high school course load. Electronics, construction, masonry, secretarial, and bookkeeping are all occupations based on solid English, mathematics, and science skills. The more preparation students have in these areas, the more opportunities they will have for professional success.

How can you determine what your student should take beyond the minimum high school graduation requirements? A couple of statewide standards currently exist: the high school core curriculum requirements and the College Preparatory Studies Certificate. These standards can be used to determine what courses your student should take during high school.

## THE HIGH SCHOOL CORE CURRICULUM

Why have the core curriculum requirements? Because after extensive study, the CBHE concluded that students need a minimum level of high school preparation to be successful beyond high school. To find out what the CBHE core requirements are, see the accompanying "High School Core Curriculum" chart at the bottom of this page.

## OTHER CURRICULAR RECOMMENDATIONS

The CBHE core curriculum will not be the only set of course requirements you'll be seeing throughout your student's high school years. The Missouri State Board of Education awards the College Preparatory Studies Certificate to Missouri students who successfully complete a rigorous core of courses in a public high school. Participating school districts award the College

Preparatory Studies Certificate to students who voluntarily meet the criteria.

The certificate provides an incentive for college-bound students but, as with the CBHE core curriculum, even students who aren't planning to attend college should use the requirements as a guide for getting a well-rounded high school education. The College Preparatory Studies Certificate requirements appear on page 4.

In addition, don't overlook the admission requirements at individual two- and four-year colleges. Institutions typically have their own unique criteria for admission. Contact the individual college for its admission requirements.

## THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL

The proof is in. The bigger the core curriculum students take, the harder it will be for them to fall out of success beyond high school. In other words, the best choices are the tough ones. If your son or daughter is planning to attend college, choosing tougher courses should prepare him or her better – and make studying in college an easier task. If your student is planning to enter a community college, vocational/ technical school, or isn't planning to pursue education after high school, persistence through a challenging curriculum will better prepare him or her for

a more successful life and for meeting the demands of employers.

## WHERE'S THE PROOF?

Data collected by the CBHE indicates that high school students who take the CBHE-recommended high school core curriculum requirements and enroll in Missouri public four-year colleges and universities achieve higher scores on standardized examinations

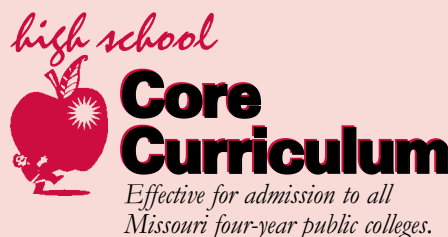
***It is just as crucial that you take an active role in knowing what courses your high school offers, what courses are important in meeting your student's career goals, and what courses he or she actually takes throughout high school.***

such as the ACT assessment.

For example, first-time full-time degree-seeking students enrolled in Missouri public four-year colleges and universities who took the ACT assessment and had the recommended high school core curriculum averaged a composite score of nearly 25 (24.7), while those who did not averaged less than a 22 (21.5).

The proportion of the freshmen enrolled in Missouri's four-year public colleges and universities who took the CBHE recommended high school core requirements has increased from 46 percent in fall 1992 to 83 percent in fall 1997.

Along with higher test scores, students who take the tougher courses also achieve a higher grade-point average in high school and graduate from college at a higher rate than those who do not take the core requirements. ♦



Examples of generally acceptable courses are listed under each core area. Note: One unit is equal to one year of high school course study. Not all courses in a given subject area qualify as core courses. Some institutions may require courses in addition to these core courses. Contact your high school counselor for more information.

### ENGLISH: 4 units

*Two units must emphasize composition or writing skills*

- ☞ English or language arts
- ☞ literature
- ☞ speech or debate
- ☞ journalism

### SCIENCE: 2 units

*One unit must be a laboratory course*

- ☞ biology
- ☞ chemistry
- ☞ physiology
- ☞ physics
- ☞ anatomy

### VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS: 1 unit

- ☞ art
- ☞ dance
- ☞ music, band or choir
- ☞ theatre or drama

### MATHEMATICS: 3 units

- ☞ algebra
- ☞ algebra II
- ☞ trigonometry
- ☞ geometry
- ☞ calculus

### SOCIAL STUDIES: 3 units

- ☞ world history
- ☞ political science
- ☞ American history
- ☞ American government
- ☞ economics
- ☞ geography

### ELECTIVES: 3 units

Two units of foreign language are strongly recommended; up to three units of foreign language are allowed. Or, students may take courses from two or more of the following core areas: English, mathematics, social studies, science and visual/performing arts.

## The Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority

**T**he Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) is a not-for-profit financial institution. Each year, MOHELA originates loans in conjunction with lending institutions. MOHELA also purchases loans from lending institutions and then services the loan(s) of those borrowers during the repayment period. MOHELA serves as the origination and servicing agent for most private lenders in Missouri, and is the only Missouri-based secondary market.

MOHELA maintains a partnership role with private lenders in developing programs that make loans available to Missourians for postsecondary education. Impending changes in federal loan programs stand to increase the value and scope of MOHELA's vital role.

If you are a parent with a student who has already enrolled in or completed college, or if you have outstanding education loans, contact MOHELA about loan consolidation by calling its loan consolidation hotline at (800) 666-4352, ext. 3444, today. ❖

## OPTIONS, from page 2

and universities to determine which courses are awarded credit for students who are successful on AP examinations. The exams are administered at the end of every school year. High school teachers use the College Board's general guidelines to challenge and raise expectations of students who are willing and able to apply themselves to college-level classes.

Progress is being made toward making AP programs available in all Missouri public and private high schools. If your high school offers AP courses, your student can enroll in them and, if completed successfully, has the potential to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both at virtually all Missouri colleges and universities.

Institutions vary in the amount of AP credit they accept. To find out what a college will accept, contact that institution's admissions office. For a complete listing of AP courses accepted, test scores required, credit hours granted, and courses satisfied among Missouri colleges and universities, write or call: Cheryl Kesel, CBHE, 3515 Amazonas Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109; (573) 751-2361.

### ➤ **TWO-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

There are excellent two-year colleges in Missouri. Community colleges are often less expensive than four-year universities. Their locations may make it possible for students to live at home while attending, and they are geared both for the full-time or part-time student who may

## *The College Preparatory Studies Certificate*

*To be eligible for the certificate, students must meet several requirements including the completion of a rigorous high school program cooperatively planned by the school, the student, and the student's parents. This program must include at least these units of credit:*

### **Units/Subjects**

- 4** English/Language Arts
- 3** Mathematics
- 2** Science
- 3** Social Studies
- 1** Fine Arts
- 1** Practical Arts
- 1** Physical Education
- 6** Electives
- 3** Units in foreign language and/or additional advanced courses from English, mathematics, science or social studies and/or advanced vocational/technical courses

### **24 TOTAL**

*For a complete copy of the requirements and guidelines for the Certificate, see your high school guidance office or write to the Division of Instruction, Missouri Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480.*

be employed. If your son or daughter chooses to attend a community college with the intent to transfer to a four-year college, he or she should contact the four-year institution to find out which community college credits will transfer and be accepted. ❖